

HOME PAGES

POCANTICO HILLS SCHOOL BUDGET INFORMATION BULLETIN

MAY 2011

Dear Residents,

On March 8, 2011, the Pocantico School Board of Education began to deliberate over the proposed 2011-2012 budget. As part of the preparation for the budget, a set of guiding principles was developed:



1. To prepare our students to access rigorous learning for 21st century skills at our three public high schools or the private high schools of their choice.
2. To ensure that all staff are working full-time as per the contract.
3. To ensure that all resources, human and material, are organized in the most efficient and effective manner possible to enable us to deliver a high quality educational experience to our students.

These principals have engaged our thinking and guided our decisions.

The Board of Education adopted the proposed budget on April 15, 2011. The Administration and the Board of Education continue in their commitment to being transparent and to ensuring that the community has many opportunities for input to the budget. Consequently you will see an enhanced look to the budget. Under each line item is information about the areas contained within that line of the proposed budget; you also will see if that budget line is increasing/decreasing and the specific amount.

We added three new opportunities for the community to review the budget. They were on April 11 (Pocantico Hills Fire House 7 -8:30 p.m.), April 12 (Westchester Hills Condominiums Recreation

Continued on page 11

Pocantico Hills Budget Overview

- Proposed Budget: \$26,019,046
- Current Budget: \$25,457,451
- Budget percent increase: 2.21%
- Tax levy increase: .88%
- Budget-to-budget increase: \$561,695

REMEMBER TO VOTE!

Tuesday, MAY 17
7 a.m. to 9 p.m. School Library
For questions on the 2011-2012 Budget, please
e-mail us at
budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org.

Our proposed 2011-2012 School Budget Plan provides for the following educational and community services:

- Implementation of a multi-year educational vision
- Curriculum alignment with feeder high schools
- Initiation of a strategic plan to review curriculum in all content areas Pre K-8
- Tax Certiorari Reserve increase of \$550,000
- Instrumental music lessons beginning in grade 4
- After-School Program
- Summer Recreation Program
- Swimming Pool



Public Budget Hearing

Community is invited to Public Budget Hearing: Tuesday, May 10, 2011, 8 p.m., School Library

National Blue Ribbon School

2011-2012 PROPOSED - SCHOOL BUDGET

Categories	Budget 2010-2011	Proposed Budget 2011-20112	Increase or Decrease
BOARD OF EDUCATION			
BOARD OF EDUCATION	13,728	12,110	(1,618)
DISTRICT CLERK	8,600	6,600	(2,000)
DISTRICT MEETING	6,072	11,402	5,330
Total Board of Education	28,400	30,112	1,712
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION			
CHIEF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	319,672	338,399	18,727
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION	364,473	362,887	(1,586)
AUDITING SERVICE	59,900	67,555	7,655
TREASURER	29,842	28,896	(946)
LEGAL SERVICES	283,061	269,524	(13,537)
PUBLIC INFORMATION	49,103	48,577	(526)
Total Central Administration	1,106,051	1,115,837	9,786
CENTRAL SERVICES			
OPERATIONS and MAINTENANCE	1,273,500	1,307,882	34,382
CENTRAL PRINTING and MAILING	45,424	51,583	6,159
Total Central Services	1,318,924	1,359,466	40,542
SPECIAL ITEMS			
INSURANCE	61,359	46,928	(14,431)
JUDGEMENTS AND CLAIMS	450,000	1,000,000	550,000
CONTRACTUAL EXPENSES	98,012	92,088	(5,924)
METROPOLITAN COMMUTER TAX	29,816	24,496	(5,320)
BOCES ADMIN. CHARGE	47,020	49,371	2,351
Total Special Items	686,207	1,212,882	526,675
INSTRUCTION			
SUPERVISION	75,710	206,341	130,631
INSERVICE TRAINING	41,990	50,655	8,665
TEACHING-REGULAR SCHOOL	9,457,566	9,742,173	284,607
SPECIAL EDUCATION	4,145,903	3,731,197	(414,706)
SCHOOL LIBRARY and AV	133,032	137,328	4,296
COMPUTER ASSISTED INSTRUCTION	605,779	314,455	(291,324)
PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES	373,120	316,246	(56,874)
INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS	49,098	46,641	(2,457)
Total Instruction	14,882,198	14,545,036	(337,162)
TRANSPORTATION			
DISTRICT	839,130	868,500	29,370
CONTRACT	484,026	482,534	(1,492)
Total Transportation	1,323,156	1,351,034	27,878
COMMUNITY SERVICE			
COMMUNITY RECREATION	156,444	153,344	(3,100)
SUMMER DAY CAMP	311,808	316,405	4,597
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM	83,482	67,891	(15,591)
Total Community Service	551,734	537,640	(14,094)
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS			
EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT	157,181	306,596	149,415
TEACHER RETIREMENT	555,196	572,878	17,682
SOCIAL SECURITY	579,931	575,307	(4,624)
WORKERS COMP	58,605	78,197	19,592
EMPLOYEE BENEFIT FUND	120,991	114,827	(6,164)
MEDICAL INSURANCE	1,577,728	1,801,525	223,797
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	45,000	45,000	-
DISABILITY INSURANCE	2,500	2,500	-
LIFE INSURANCE and ANNUITY	10,878	11,372	494
EMPLOYEE ASISSTANCE PROGRAMS	2,258	2,150	(108)
Total Employee Benefits	3,110,268	3,510,352	400,084
DEBT SERVICE			
BOND PRINCIPAL	1,270,000	1,364,000	94,000
BOND INTEREST	1,075,513	887,686	(187,827)
Total Debt Service	2,345,513	2,251,686	(93,827)
TRANSFERS			
INTERFUND TRANSFERS	105,000	105,000	-
	25,457,451	26,019,046	561,595

Members of the Board serve without compensation. This code covers expenses incurred by the Board in the performance of its duties inclusive of the annual district election and District Clerk's office.

These categories cover day-to-day management of the school district that is the responsibility of the Superintendent and Central Administration. Included are costs for district-wide administration, contract matters and legal services, district publications and general business functions.

Expenses in this category reflect custodial, maintenance and operational costs for district buildings. Also included are expenses for district-wide postage.

Expenses in this category reflect various types of insurance such as liability and student accident insurance; school dues and our share of BOCES administrative costs. The increase in this category primarily reflects the District's efforts to proactively address tax certiorari claims filed against the District.

This category reflects the majority of the school district's costs for operation of our regular and special education programs, athletics, co-curricular, health services, library, computer instruction program, psychological services and attendance.

District Policy states that no student shall walk more than one-quarter mile to a bus stop or school of attendance, and extra consideration is given to children in grades PreK-2. The district provides monitors on large buses for grades PreK-8 and to special education schools as determined by a student's Individual Education Plan.

These expenses are associated with the community pool program, summer day camp, after-school program and census.

Expenses in this category reflect mandated or contractually required costs for employee benefits.

Expenses in this category reflect the repayment of funds borrowed for tax certiorari claims, and for the purpose of new school buses and for building reconstruction.

Expenses in this category reflect the district's subsidy for the school lunch program, and the district's costs for extended special education programs.

About the Proposed Budget

Q. How are the guiding principles used to develop the 2011-2012 proposed budget?

A. The guiding principles are detailed below.

1. To prepare our students to access rigorous learning for 21st century skills at our three public high schools or the private high schools of their choice.

The budget supports new and current academic initiatives; some of those that are included in the budget are:

Curriculum Implementation:

New Reading PK-2
New Science PK-6

Curriculum Alignment:

Common Core Math/ELA PK-8

Curriculum Development:

Science Regents and Advanced 8
Science Pre-Regents and Advanced 7
Math Regents and Advanced 8
Math Pre-Regents and Advanced 7
Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) Program K-8

Curriculum Search and Evaluation:

Math PK-6

Framework Development:

RTI Protocols and Resources PK-8
High School Articulation and Learning Communities with Neighboring Districts

Professional Development:

Differentiation PK-8
RTI Tier I Interventions PK-8
Lesson Planning PK-8
Common Core Standards PK-8
Curriculum Mapping PK-8
Data Analysis PK-8
Science PK-8
Math 7-8

2. To ensure that all staff are working full-time as per the contract.

- In order for our students to be competitive, it is important to increase the teacher-student contact time to ensure that students have sufficient time with their subject classroom teachers. To that end, we have created a Master Schedule. This is a critical and important change as we strive to develop rigorous and highly competitive educational programs that prepare our students to go to the high schools of their choice and to access the honors and advanced placement classes in greater numbers and with more competitive skills.
- Currently teachers in many surrounding districts teach up to 30 periods a week; our contractual obligations call for 28 teaching periods.

3. To ensure that all resources, human and material, are organized in the most efficient and effective manner possible to enable us to deliver a high quality educational experience to our students. District staff has been reduced by 4.25 FTE (Full Time Equivalents) as follows:

- We have eliminated 1.0 FTE teaching position providing computer instruction as a separate pullout program. This work will be performed by the library media specialist, classroom teachers and S.T.E.M. teacher.
- We have reduced world language from two full-time teacher positions bringing the total to 1.6



Geography Game Night poses challenging questions for students in grades 4-6.

For more information, please visit our website:
www.pocanticohills.org

teacher positions. World language, which previously began in grade 2, now begins in grade 3. Even so, our world language program remains more significant than those of other nearby districts with grades 3 and 4 meeting two times a week and grades 5-8 meeting four times a week (where previously it was five).

- We have eliminated the physical education by 1.0 FTE teaching position.
- We have eliminated 1.0 FTE special education teacher.
- We have reduced by .60 FTE special education teaching position.
- We have eliminated 1.0 FTE special education teaching assistant.
- We have reduced the psychologist from .80 FTE to .40 FTE.
- We have reduced by .20 FTE the English as a Second Language teaching function.
- We are recommending increasing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (S.T.E.M.) teacher from .40 to .80 FTE.
- We are recommending increasing Family and Consumer Education by .20 FTE bringing this position to a .70 FTE position.
- We have added 1.0 FTE computer technician, predominantly replacing the District's reliance on computer and network support provided by BOCES.
- We have eliminated .45 FTE elementary science teaching assistant. This function will be performed by our classroom teachers.
- In 2010-2011 we introduced an Interim Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction, Technology Integration Specialist, and Chief Information Officer (CIO) for educational data. We are recommending this be made permanent.



Pre-K students enjoy library time with Mrs. Price-Gordon.

Q. Why are we recommending a Coordinator for Curriculum and Instruction, Technology Integration Specialist, and Chief Information Officer?

A. Whether large or small, schools are complicated and complex organizations. New laws, mandates and expectations for curriculum/instruction and student/teacher performance are constantly changing. For this reason, we must have highly skilled educators who can meet the challenges of a global 21st century.

We also have recent legislation, *Race to the Top*, which mandates changes in teacher and administrator evaluations that are tied to student achievement. This law also mandates that schools have a CIO – Chief Information Officer. This is an unfunded mandate. This position supports the implementation of the law, specifically to identify, verify, maintain, report and analyze all of the district's



The annual Halloween Parade gets everyone out and moving.



Third and fourth grade students bake johnnycakes during Colonial Day.

About the Proposed Budget

data on student performance class by class.

Additionally, New York recently adopted the new Common Core Standards, which call for changes in how we teach, the type of learning experiences our students have, and the expected outcomes. Fostering critical thinking, independent adaptation and application of knowledge, integration of technology and communication skills have never been more important.

The State has also mandated that schools finalize their plans for overseeing the implementation of a new model for regular education students who are experiencing academic challenges – it is called *Response to Intervention (RTI)*. This will remain another critical responsibility next year and beyond. This model for support must occur in the classroom and requires intense training of our teachers.

All of these mandates, combined with the ongoing tasks of facilitating curriculum initiatives, providing targeted professional development and support, and serving as a technology integration specialist amidst an ever-changing technological landscape makes a four member administration team absolutely critical at this time. When these needs are met, we will reevaluate the administrator needs and make recommendations based upon the needs of the District at that time. We also will make regular presentations to the Board of Education and public on how we are implementing our response to the needs we have outlined.

Q. How does this position affect the budget?

A. This position will effectively be a cost savings to the District since it eliminates a 10-month teaching position at \$121,000 and consolidates several roles, including Technology Integration Specialist. The Curriculum Coordinator, a 12-month position at a salary of \$133,000, will replace the BOCES technology coordinator (\$82,471) and also serve as Chief Information Officer (\$35,000), a position which is mandated under Race To the Top, thereby resulting in a net cost savings of (\$105,471).



Pre-K students play at station that teaches small motor skills.

Q. Why can't these responsibilities be handled by the Superintendent?

- A. The Superintendent has many responsibilities that must be fulfilled, including Human Resources and Special Education.
- She cannot devote sufficient time to ensure the detailed research and planning that is needed to implement the Curriculum and Instructions changes.
 - She cannot perform the duties of the Chief In-



Third graders harvest lettuce as part of gardening program.

For more information, please visit our website:
www.pocanticohills.org

About the Proposed Budget

formation Officer as these duties have to be performed by someone other than the Superintendent.

- The Superintendent's role is to make decisions about Curriculum and Instruction, plan, monitor, supervise and implement and/or ensure implementation of Curriculum and Instruction decisions and evaluate the outcome; revise plans based on the success or continued challenges presented.

Q. How has the District organized the special education department?

- A. We have reorganized the special education department as per the special education audit performed during 2010-2011 and the IDEIA Law of 2004, which becomes effective during the 2011-2012 school year. These changes will better meet the needs of our students and ensure that we are meeting all mandated Federal and State laws.



Sixth-grade students are attentive during Mr. Suarez's science class.



Dr. Douglas visits with students.

Q. What is the projected budget-to-budget increase, tax levy increase and tax rate increase(s)?

- A. The budget-to-budget increase is projected to be a 2.21% increase.

The tax levy is projected to increase by .88%.

The tax rate increase for Greenburgh is projected to be 6.53%.

The tax rate increase for Mt. Pleasant is projected to be 4.26%.

Q. How does the budget-to-budget increase compare to those of prior years?

- A. The 2011-2012 proposed budget provides for **the lowest budget-to-budget increase in the last 10 years.**

Q. How does the tax levy increase compare to those of prior years?

- A. The 2011-2012 proposed tax levy provides for **the lowest levy increase in the last 10 years.**

About the Proposed Budget

Q. How much has the budget increased over the 2010-2011 budget, and in what areas have expenditures increased the most?

A. The increases and decreases in the budget are as follows:

Salaries	\$ (481,627)
Benefits	399,908
Equipment	(11,966)
Contractual Expenses	(36,889)
Supplies	(8,344)
Tuition	269,199
Textbooks	14,956
BOCES	(70,039)
Utilities	30,576
Debt Service/Transfers	(93,827)
Software	(353)
Tax Certiorari Reserve	550,000
TOTAL	\$561,595

The overall proposed budget represents an increase of 2.21% (\$561,595). The large increase in Tax Certiorari Reserve provides for an increase of \$550,000 bringing the total budgeted amount to \$1,000,000. This budget allocation will permit the District to continue to formally address the approximately 70 outstanding tax certiorari claims already filed against the Pocantico Hills Central School District. This line item comprises most of the 2011-2012 budget increase.

REMEMBER TO VOTE!

Tuesday, May 17

7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in the School Library

For questions on the 2011-2012 Budget,
please email us at

budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org



Second grader works on math problems.

Q. What is a tax certiorari claim?

A. Tax certiorari claims are made by commercial property owners when they believe that their property is assessed at too high a level, and their tax bill is also too high. A court-ordered judgment can reduce the assessment of a commercial property, and provide for refunds to the commercial property owner for taxes they might have overpaid in prior years and reductions in their assessed value.

Q. With the increase in the tax certiorari budget line of \$550,000, will the District still have to borrow to pay tax certiorari refunds?

A. Yes, even though the proposed budget provides for a \$1,000,000 line item, the budget still provides for the need to borrow approximately \$3,000,000.

Q. Have funds been included in the 2011-2012 proposed budget to operate the District's swimming pool?

A. Yes, the reconstruction of the pool is proceeding according to schedule, and it is expected to open this summer. Funds have been included in the budget to operate the pool.

About the Proposed Budget



Mr. Cook gives students a demonstration on scuba diving equipment as part of their unit on sharks.

Q. What will happen if the community does not approve the school budget on May 17, 2011?

A. State law provides that the Board of Education can, if it wishes, resubmit the same or a different budget to the community for approval once. If it is disapproved by the community again, or the Board of Education decides not to resubmit the budget, the school district will operate on a contingency budget.

Q. What is the contingency budget increase, how does it compare to the proposed budget increase, and what will the tax rate be under a contingency budget?

A. New York State law places a spending cap on a District's contingency budget, with a few excep-

tions made for repaying debt, costs associated with enrollment growth, etc. The State-imposed spending cap for 2011-2012 is 120% of the CPI or 4%, whichever is lower. For 2011-2012, the cap would provide for a 1.92% increase; however, total spending will increase by 2.12%, which provides for projected enrollment growth. The projected tax rate under a contingency budget for the Town of Greenburgh would be 6.41% and 4.14% for Mt. Pleasant.

Q. What is the difference between the Proposed Budget and the Contingency Budget?

A. Since the proposed budget is below the amount of a contingency budget calculated using



Art in Pre-K encourages creativity.

Budget-to-Budget Increase

2010-2011 Budget	2011-2012 Proposed Budget Expenditures	Budget-to-Budget Increase	Percent of Budget-to-Budget Increase
\$25,457,451	\$26,019,046	\$561,595	2.21%

About the Proposed Budget

the State's formula, should the budget not be approved by District residents, only equipment would be removed from the proposed budget. The Contingency Budget would be .09% or \$22,184 less than the proposed budget.

Q. How is the community impacted if the District operates under a contingency budget?

A. Under a contingency budget, the community will not be able to utilize the District's buildings and grounds in the same way that the District's facilities can be used under an approved budget. State regulations require the school district to calculate the cost of the use of the buildings and grounds by community groups, and to pass these costs along to the community groups utilizing the District's buildings and grounds.

Q. How is the school budget communicated to District residents?

A. The District has followed a communication plan that provides opportunities for residents to have input into the development of the draft budget before the Board's adoption of the budget on April 15, 2011. The District's communication plan has been posted to the District's website, www.pocanticohills.org. A PowerPoint presentation and other documentation, including the most recent working draft, are posted there. The District's intention is to communicate more effectively with the community, to seek input and suggestions, to explain the budget in terms more easily understood by the community, and to ensure that the budget meets the needs of the District's students and residents.

For more information, please visit our website: www.pocanticohills.org

District Personnel

	Budgeted 2010-2011	Adjusted 2010-2011	Budgeted 2011-2012	Adjusted Increase (Decrease)
Administrators	3.00	4.00	4.00	-
Clerical	8.00	8.00	8.00	-
Security	-	1.00	1.00	-
Custodial/Drivers	11.90	11.90	11.90	-
Computer Technician	-	-	1.00	1.00
Teachers	40.80	39.60	35.80	(3.80)
Teaching Assistants	7.45	7.45	6.00	(1.45)
Teacher Aides	5.00	7.00	7.00	-
Monitors	5.00	5.00	5.00	-
After School	2.50	2.00	2.00	-
Day Camp*	2.00	2.00	2.00	-
Total	85.65	87.95	83.70	(4.25)

*Excludes Seasonal Employees

2011-2012 Summary of Proposed Tax Rates

	2011-2012	% Budget Increase	Estimated Greenburgh Tax Rate Decrease	Estimated Mt. Pleasant Tax Rate Decrease
Budget	26,019,046	2.21%	6.53%	4.26%

**REMEMBER
TO VOTE!**
Tuesday, May 17
7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
School Library

Note: Equalization rate and Assessed Valuation as of 3.31.11

2011-2012 Projected Tax GREENBURGH

Assessed Value	Fair Market Value	2010-2011 Annual Taxes	2011-2012 Projected Annual Taxes	2011-2012 Annual Increase	2011-2012 Monthly Increase
3,350	100,000	863	919	56	5
8,375	250,000	2,157	2,298	141	12
16,750	500,000	4,314	4,595	282	23
25,125	750,000	6,471	6,893	422	35
33,500	1,000,000	8,627	9,191	563	47

2011-2012 Projected Tax MT. PLEASANT

Assessed Value	Fair Market Value	2010-2011 Annual Taxes	2011-2012 Projected Annual Taxes	2011-2012 Annual Increase	2011-2012 Monthly Increase
1,520	100,000	882	919	38	3
3,800	250,000	2,204	2,298	94	8
7,600	500,000	4,408	4,595	188	16
11,400	750,000	6,611	6,893	282	23
15,200	1,000,000	8,815	9,191	375	31

If you would like more information about this year's budget or the upcoming vote, please email us at budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org.

Continued from page 1

Hall 7-8:30 p.m.) and April 28 (Pocantico Hills Fire House 7-8:30 p.m.).

The budget is also posted on the District’s web page. If you have comments, please forward them to budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

It is never easy to develop a budget, and it is even more difficult because we want to do so much for our children. Unfortunately, the current financial climate and competing academic needs related to developing competitive students for the 21st century require that we make critical choices. The BOE hired me to make such choices. I have spent

the past eight months – since I was named your superintendent – gathering information from the community, the high schools our students attend and observing in our classrooms so that I could make informed recommendations for the students. Those recommendations are supported in this budget. Ultimately that is the role of a budget: To support the goals of the District, which include the academic, artistic and physical education goals.

Sincerely,

Dr. Valencia F. Douglas, Ed.D.,
Superintendent of School



“Annie Junior,” performed by Middle School students, was a great theatrical success, as well as a lesson in history.

Projected 2011-2012 Revenues

	Budgeted Revenue 2010-2011	Budgeted Revenue 2011-2012	\$ Change
State Aid	818,624	915,121	96,497
Incarcerated youth	3,153,150	3,153,150	-
Other Revenues	838,791	1,128,016	289,224
Fund Balance Transfer	590,000	590,000	-
Total Tax Levy	20,056,886	20,232,759	175,873
Total Revenue	25,457,451	26,019,046	561,595

POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL
599 Bedford Road
Sleepy Hollow, N.Y. 10591

Non-Profit Organization
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Permit #2033

Board of Education

John Conrad, *President*
David Wilens, *Vice President*
Frederic Rickles, *Trustee*
Emily Segal, *Trustee*
Katherine Yu, *Trustee*

District Administration

Valencia F. Douglas, Ed.D., *Superintendent*
Mr. Jay Scotto-Friedman, *Assistant Superintendent*
Stanley T. Steele, *Principal*
Mr. Adam Brown, *Interim Curriculum Coordinator*

Important Budget Dates

Tuesday, May 10, 2011

Public Budget Hearing, 8 p.m. School Library

Friday, May 13, 2011

Last day to register to vote. Voters may register to vote at any time up to and including May 13 at the District office, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011

Budget Vote 7 a.m. – 9 p.m.
School Library

Applications for Absentee Ballots may be applied for at the office of the School District Clerk, 599 Bedford Road, Sleepy Hollow, NY; or by calling: 914-631-2440 ext. 103.

Completed applications for absentee ballots must be received by the School District Clerk prior to 5 p.m. on May 10, 2011, if the ballot is to be mailed; by May 17, 2011 if picked up in person.

Absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk no later than 5 p.m. on the day of the vote – May 17, 2011.



National Blue Ribbon School



**LEARNING
ACHIEVEMENT
GROWTH
DIRECTION**



If you would like more information about this year's budget or the upcoming vote, please email us at budgetinfo@pocanticohills.org.